

message from the President

Dear friends,

As I hold in my hands the contents of the first issue of the ASECU journal, just before they are sent to be printed, I am reminded of our first founding Conference held at the University of Macedonia in November 1996. The 27 Universities of south-eastern Europe that were participating in that Conference elected ASECU's first Board of Directors, of which I was the President, and established as ASECU's primary objective the promotion of co-operation between its members in all possible ways. One of those objectives was also the publishing of a journal - an ambition which is at last becoming a reality!

The creation of a journal is an essential step forward for ASECU, which today already numbers 31 members, since it means the continuing existence of a forum for the exchange of views on important issues in the economic sciences, but also on developments in general in the fields of politics, society and culture. This journal is a place where we will try to show the efforts being made by our Association to study and express the possibilities for academic co-operation and development towards a common future full of opportunities and challenges for higher education in south-eastern Europe.

This first issue is being published at a time when Europe - and indeed the entire world - are experiencing important changes: weakening of international institutions, political and social destabilization, environmental problems that continue to exist without adequate solutions, new developments in sciences, but also new diseases that have a severe impact on the global